

11 Tips to Make the Most of a Conference

1) Decide on your goal for the conference.

What do you want to get out of attending? Deciding on an objective will help you stay focused during the conference and ensure you leave having accomplished at least one thing by its end.

2) Review the programming & make a schedule.

Before you attend, take a look at the conference programming. Many conferences have more seminars and activities than you can possibly attend. Take a look at which events are most important to you and prioritize those.

3) Take notes.

Bring a pen and paper or an electronic device to take notes throughout the conference. You'll want to take notes on the seminars you attend, the people you meet, and any ideas that come to mind for your business.

4) Attend the social events.

Conferences are great opportunity to network and even enjoy yourself. Take advantage of sponsored parties, breaks, and happy hours to meet others.

5) Stay in the moment.

It's easy to get distracted or want to get away to attend to your business. Try to be present by focusing on what you're learning and who you're with. Make it a point to keep the phone put away unless absolutely necessary.

6) Make the first move.

You may be worried that you won't know anyone at the conference. Many people attend conferences not knowing others. Go ahead and make the first move. Say hello and start up a conversation. Most people there will be happy to talk to you. That's what they're there for too.

7) Keep business cards handy.

Social media is the popular way to connect these days, but business cards haven't gone out of style. They're still a great way to pass along your info without taking out your phone.

8) Allow yourself down time.

If you're attending a multi-day conference or are a natural introvert, you might feel overwhelmed with all the commotion and conversation around the conference. Take care of yourself by giving yourself breaks without feeling guilty about them.

9) Follow up after the conference.

Put those business cards to use and contact each person you met while at the conference. Let them know that you visited their website or read their work, recalled something that might be of interest to them, or just that you were happy to meet them.

10) Review the conference afterward.

Nowadays many conferences are available online during and afterward. This is a great way to watch seminars that you missed or those that had too much information and need review.

11) Make an action plan.

What are you going to do next? Gather your takeaways and make an action plan for what you will do after the conference.